

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN P. MARTIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONCERNING S. 1166, A BILL TO EXTEND THE AUTHORIZATION OF KALAUPAPA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**July 28, 2005**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 1166, a bill to extend the authorization of the Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Commission. The advisory commission is due to expire on December 22, 2005; this bill would extend the commission another twenty years, until December 22, 2025.

The Department supports this legislation with amendments described later in this statement. Extending the duration of the Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Commission for another 20 years would enable a panel of knowledgeable and dedicated individuals to provide guidance during the coming years when the park will be anticipating the change from a patient community to a more traditional national park unit.

Kalaupapa National Historical Park was established in 1980 by Public Law 96-565 to preserve and interpret the settlement on the Kalaupapa Peninsula on the island of Molokai, and to provide a well-maintained residential community for the patients with Hansen's disease (leprosy). The enabling legislation gave primary consideration to the rights and needs of the resident patients so long as they remained there. However, the legislation also anticipated the day when there would no longer be a resident patient community at Kalapaupa by providing for a reevaluation of the policies governing the management, administration, and public use of the park once that occurs.

With a patient population of fewer than 40, it is likely that sometime before 2025, there will no longer be a resident patient community at Kalaupapa. At that time, the reevaluation of policies governing the park will be undertaken, as required by the law establishing the park. An advisory commission in operation until 2025 could offer important guidance to the National Park Service, as it seeks to provide for the settlement's last remaining patients and transition the park from a site that is primarily a patient community to one that is more broadly available for public uses.

While we believe it is critically important to have the involvement of the patient community on the advisory board for as long as possible, we believe that an extension of the advisory commission for 20 years, by necessity, needs to be accompanied by a change in the allowable composition of the commission. Section 108(a) of P.L. 96-565 provides for the Secretary of the Interior to appoint seven members to the 11-member advisory commission who are present or former patients, elected by the patient community. We recommend amending this section to provide for the Secretary to appoint seven members who are knowledgeable about Kalapaupa's history and have a strong interest in the preservation of the settlement's history, if patients are unable to serve on the commission. We support retaining the requirement currently in law that the other four members be appointed from recommendations submitted by the Governor of Hawaii.

For similar reasons, we also recommend amending Section 108(d) of P.L. 96-565. This section requires the Secretary to consult with the commission on a training program for the patients, among other matters, and provides for public visitation levels to be determined by the commission on the basis of a patient referendum. For the next phase of decision-making, we

believe it would be more appropriate to amend Section 108(d) to specify that the commission should recommend to the Secretary the long-term strategic planning, education, and outreach efforts that should be undertaken by the National Park Service for the park and should advise the Secretary about appropriate visitation levels for the park.

We would be pleased to work with the subcommittee on language for amendments to Sections 108(a) and 108(d).

In the 25 years since Congress passed the enabling legislation for Kalaupapa National Historical Park, the National Park Service has built a strong relationship with many of the residents and the State of Hawaii. We have learned a lot – about Hansen’s disease, inequality, renewal and hope – through our relationship with these individuals and their families. We want those who have helped us understand the history of what happened at Kalaupapa to be involved in framing the story for the future. Providing for the advisory commission for the park to remain in existence for another 20 years will help ensure that this goal is achieved.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I will be happy to answer questions you or the other members of the subcommittee may have.